

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An endovascular laser treatment device comprising:
a ceramic spacer ~~directly~~ attached to an optical fiber and arranged near a distal end of the optical fiber, the spacer operable to position the distal end of the optical fiber away from the inner wall of the blood vessel to prevent the distal end of the optical fiber from contacting the inner wall of the blood vessel.

2 - 7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) An endovascular laser treatment device comprising:
an optical fiber operable to be inserted into a blood vessel; and
a ceramic spacer directly attached to the optical fiber, arranged near a distal end of the optical fiber and operable to position the distal end of the optical fiber away from the inner wall of the blood vessel to prevent the distal end of the optical fiber from contacting the inner wall of the blood vessel.

9 – 11. (Cancelled)

12. (Original) The endovascular laser treatment device according to claim 8, further comprising a sheath adapted to be inserted into the vessel, wherein the optical fiber and the spacer are adapted to be inserted through the sheath.

13 – 26. (Cancelled)

27. (Previously Presented) An endovascular treatment method comprising:
inserting into a blood vessel a spacer arranged near a distal end of an optical fiber; and
applying laser energy through the distal end of the optical fiber while longitudinally moving the inserted optical fiber and spacer such that the spacer positions the distal end of the optical fiber away from the inner wall of the vessel to prevent the distal end of the optical fiber from contacting the inner wall of the blood vessel and the application of laser energy causes closure of the blood vessel.

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Original) The method according to claim 27, after the step of inserting, further comprising deploying the spacer to position the distal end of the optical fiber away from the inner wall of the vessel.

31. (Previously Presented) An endovascular treatment method for treating varicose veins comprising:

inserting an optical fiber into a blood vessel, the optical fiber having a distal end;
positioning the distal end of the optical fiber within the blood vessel out of contact with the inner wall of the blood vessel to prevent the distal end of the optical fiber from contacting the inner wall of the blood vessel; and

delivering laser energy through the positioned distal end of the optical fiber while longitudinally moving the inserted optical fiber to cause closure of the blood vessel.

32. (Original) The method according to claim 31, wherein the step of positioning includes the step of deploying a spacer from an undeployed state to a deployed state near the distal end of the optical fiber.

33. (Original) The method according to claim 31, prior to the step of inserting an optical fiber, further comprising inserting a sheath through the vessel wherein the step of inserting an optical fiber includes inserting through the sheath the optical fiber and a spacer.

34. (Original) The method according to claim 33, prior to the step of delivering laser energy, further comprising securely connecting the optical fiber to the sheath.

35. (New) The method according to claim 27, wherein the spacer is a ceramic spacer.